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Occupational Employment and Wages in Birmingham-Hoover — May 2015

Workers in the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area had an average (mean) hourly wage of \$21.92 in May 2015, about 6 percent below the nationwide average of \$23.23, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin noted that, after testing for statistical significance, wages in the local area were lower than their respective national averages in 15 of the 22 major occupational groups, including personal care and service; computer and mathematical; and construction and extraction. Management was one of two groups that had an average wage that was measurably higher than its respective national average.

When compared to the nationwide distribution, local employment was more highly concentrated in 5 of the 22 occupational groups, including healthcare practitioners and technical; sales and related; and office and administrative support. Conversely, 12 groups had employment shares significantly below their national representation, including food preparation and serving related; education, training, and library; and management. (See [table A](#) and [box note](#) at end of release.)

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Birmingham	United States	Birmingham	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Total, all occupations	100.0%	100.0%	\$23.23	\$21.92*	-6
Management	5.0	4.2*	55.30	57.51*	4
Business and financial operations	5.1	4.4*	35.48	33.00*	-7
Computer and mathematical	2.9	2.6*	41.43	36.21*	-13
Architecture and engineering	1.8	1.4*	39.89	37.21*	-7
Life, physical, and social science	0.8	0.5*	34.24	28.21*	-18
Community and social services	1.4	0.8*	22.19	21.03*	-5
Legal	0.8	0.8	49.74	43.69*	-12
Education, training, and library	6.2	5.2*	25.48	24.81	-3
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media	1.3	1.1*	27.39	20.17*	-26
Healthcare practitioner and technical	5.8	7.9*	37.40	36.05	-4
Healthcare support	2.9	2.7	14.19	12.56*	-11
Protective service	2.4	2.7*	21.45	16.97*	-21
Food preparation and serving related	9.1	8.1*	10.98	10.08*	-8
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance	3.2	2.6*	13.02	11.51*	-12
Personal care and service	3.1	2.6*	12.33	10.72*	-13
Sales and related	10.5	12.5*	18.90	18.48	-2
Office and administrative support	15.8	16.9*	17.47	16.96*	-3
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0.3	0.1*	12.67	14.34*	13
Construction and extraction	4.0	4.1	22.88	20.02*	-13
Installation, maintenance, and repair	3.9	4.7*	22.11	22.35	1

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table A. Occupational employment and wages by major occupational group, United States and the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area, and measures of statistical significance, May 2015 - Continued

Major occupational group	Percent of total employment		Mean hourly wage		
	United States	Birmingham	United States	Birmingham	Percent difference ⁽¹⁾
Production	6.6	6.6	17.41	16.68*	-4
Transportation and material moving	6.9	7.3	16.90	15.98	-5

Footnotes:

(1) A positive percent difference measures how much the mean wage in Birmingham-Hoover is above the national mean wage, while a negative difference reflects a lower wage.

* The percent share of employment or mean hourly wage for this area is significantly different from the national average of all areas at the 90-percent confidence level.

One occupational group—healthcare practitioners and technical—was chosen to illustrate the diversity of data available for any of the 22 major occupational categories. Birmingham-Hoover had 39,390 jobs in healthcare practitioners and technical, accounting for 7.9 percent of local area employment, significantly higher than the 5.8-percent share nationally. The average hourly wage for this occupational group locally was \$36.05, compared to the national wage of \$37.40.

Some of the larger detailed occupations within the healthcare practitioners and technical group included registered nurses (14,770), licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses (3,950), and pharmacy technicians (1,940). Among the higher paying jobs were general internists and surgeons, with mean hourly wages of \$120.46 and \$98.93, respectively. At the lower end of the wage scale were pharmacy technicians (\$13.00) and emergency medical technicians and paramedics (\$13.44). (Detailed occupational data for healthcare practitioners and technical are presented in [table 1](#); for a complete listing of detailed occupations available go to www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_13820.htm.)

Location quotients allow us to explore the occupational make-up of a metropolitan area by comparing the composition of jobs in an area relative to the national average. (See [table 1](#).) For example, a location quotient of 2.0 indicates that an occupation accounts for twice the share of employment in the area than it does nationally. In the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area, above-average concentrations of employment were found in some of the occupations within the healthcare practitioners and technical group. For instance, nurse anesthetists were employed at 4.2 times the national rate in Birmingham, and dietitians and nutritionists, at 2.3 times the U.S. average. On the other hand, physical therapists had a location quotient of 1.0 in Birmingham, indicating that this particular occupation's local and national employment shares were similar.

These statistics are from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey, a federal-state cooperative program between BLS and State Workforce Agencies, in this case, the Alabama Department of Labor.

Notes on Occupational Employment Statistics Data

With the issuance of data for May 2015, the OES program has incorporated redefined metropolitan area definitions as designated by the Office of Management and Budget. OES data are available for 394 metropolitan areas, 38 metropolitan divisions, and 167 OES-defined nonmetropolitan areas. A listing of the areas and their definitions can be found at www.bls.gov/oes/current/msa_def.htm.

A value that is statistically different from another does not necessarily mean that the difference has economic or practical significance. Statistical significance is concerned with the ability to make confident statements about a universe based on a sample. It is entirely possible that a large difference between two values is not significantly different statistically, while a small difference is, since both the size and heterogeneity of the sample affect the relative error of the data being tested.

Technical Note

The Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey is a semiannual mail survey measuring occupational employment and wage rates for wage and salary workers in nonfarm establishments in the United States. The OES program produces employment and wage estimates for over 800 occupations for all industries combined in the nation; the 50 states and the District of Columbia; 432 metropolitan areas and divisions; 167 nonmetropolitan areas; and Guam, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. National estimates are also available by industry for NAICS sectors, 3-, 4-, and selected 5- and 6-digit industries, and by ownership across all industries and for schools and hospitals. OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/tables.htm.

OES estimates are constructed from a sample of about 1.2 million establishments. Forms are mailed to approximately 200,000 sampled establishments in May and November each year. May 2015 estimates are based on responses from six semiannual panels collected over a 3-year period: May 2015, November 2014, May 2014, November 2013, May 2013, and November 2012. The overall national response rate for the six panels is 73.5 percent based on establishments and 69.6 percent based on weighted sampled employment. The unweighted employment of sampled establishments across all six semiannual panels represents approximately 57.9 percent of total national employment. (Response rates are slightly lower for these estimates due to the federal shutdown in October 2013.) The sample in the Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area included 3,495 establishments with a response rate of 73 percent. For more information about OES concepts and methodology, go to www.bls.gov/news.release/ocwage.tn.htm.

The May 2015 OES estimates are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system and the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Information about the 2010 SOC is available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/soc and information about the 2012 NAICS is available at www.bls.gov/bls/naics.htm.

Metropolitan Area definitions

The substate area data published in this release reflect the standards and definitions established by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

The **Birmingham-Hoover, Ala. Metropolitan Statistical Area** includes Bibb, Blount, Chilton, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair, and Walker Counties.

Additional information

OES data are available on our regional web page at www.bls.gov/regions/southeast. Answers to frequently asked questions about the OES data are available at www.bls.gov/oes/oes_ques.htm. Detailed technical information about the OES survey is available in our Survey Methods and Reliability Statement on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/oes/current/methods_statement.pdf.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: (202) 691-5200; Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339.

Table 1. Employment and wage data from the Occupational Employment Statistics survey, by occupation, Birmingham-Hoover Metropolitan Statistical Area, May 2015

Occupation ⁽¹⁾	Employment		Mean wages	
	Level ⁽²⁾	Location quotient ⁽³⁾	Hourly	Annual ⁽⁴⁾
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	39,390	1.4	\$36.05	\$74,990
Dentists, General	280	0.8	68.83	143,170
Orthodontists	100	5.2	84.69	176,160
Dietitians and Nutritionists	490	2.3	22.54	46,880
Optometrists	130	1.0	44.45	92,470
Pharmacists	1,660	1.6	53.88	112,080
Anesthesiologists	(5)	(5)	(6)	(6)
Family and General Practitioners	170	0.4	80.68	167,800
Internists, General	220	1.2	120.46	250,560
Pediatricians, General	150	1.5	98.00	203,840
Psychiatrists	(5)	(5)	83.32	173,310
Surgeons	(5)	(5)	98.93	205,760
Physicians and Surgeons, All Other	2,360	2.0	129.44	269,240
Physician Assistants	140	0.4	44.53	92,630
Occupational Therapists	450	1.1	39.67	82,510
Physical Therapists	730	1.0	40.96	85,200
Radiation Therapists	80	1.2	37.73	78,470
Recreational Therapists	60	0.9	20.60	42,850
Respiratory Therapists	690	1.6	22.93	47,690
Speech-Language Pathologists	440	0.9	32.36	67,310
Veterinarians	270	1.1	36.28	75,460
Registered Nurses	14,770	1.5	28.38	59,030
Nurse Anesthetists	600	4.2	79.86	166,110
Nurse Practitioners	560	1.1	48.95	101,810
Audiologists	50	1.2	30.97	64,420
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists	880	1.5	27.64	57,480
Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technicians	750	1.3	18.64	38,780
Dental Hygienists	670	0.9	21.32	44,350
Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	240	1.3	24.66	51,300
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	310	1.4	28.65	59,580
Nuclear Medicine Technologists	100	1.3	31.26	65,030
Radiologic Technologists	970	1.4	24.53	51,020
Magnetic Resonance Imaging Technologists	190	1.6	29.84	62,070
Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics	640	0.7	13.44	27,950
Pharmacy Technicians	1,940	1.4	13.00	27,050
Psychiatric Technicians	370	1.8	13.95	29,010
Surgical Technologists	550	1.5	17.25	35,890
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	290	0.8	14.52	30,210
Ophthalmic Medical Technicians	140	1.0	15.81	32,880
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	3,950	1.6	18.41	38,290
Medical Records and Health Information Technicians	880	1.3	17.11	35,580
Opticians, Dispensing	280	1.0	15.91	33,090
Orthotists and Prosthetists	(5)	(5)	40.88	85,040
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	310	0.8	21.74	45,220
Occupational Health and Safety Specialists	240	0.9	36.94	76,830
Athletic Trainers	130	1.5	(7)	39,560
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other	360	2.5	14.99	31,180

Footnotes:

(1) For a complete listing of all detailed occupations in Birmingham-Hoover, AL, see www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_13820.htm

(2) Estimates for detailed occupations do not sum to the totals because the totals include occupations not shown separately. Estimates do not include self-employed workers.

(3) The location quotient is the ratio of the area concentration of occupational employment to the national average concentration. A location quotient greater than one indicates the occupation has a higher share of employment than average, and a location quotient less than one indicates the occupation is less prevalent in the area than average.

(4) Annual wages have been calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a 'year-round, full-time' hours figure of 2,080 hours; for those

occupations where there is not an hourly mean wage published, the annual wage has been directly calculated from the reported survey data.

(5) Estimate not released.

(6) This wage is equal to or greater than \$90.00 per hour or \$187,200 per year.

(7) Wages for some occupations that do not generally work year-round, full time, are reported either as hourly wages or annual salaries depending on how they are typically paid.